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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

BUREAU OF EDUCATION.

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HOME ECONOMICS TEACHING UNDER PRESENT  
ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

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Why should home-economics teachers inform themselves in regard to the national food problems and clothing problems?

Because there is an opportunity of service offered to all women trained in home economics.

Teachers of home economics can reach into the homes of the patrons of the public schools and aid in extending a knowledge of food conditions. They can explain the reasons why American families are asked to modify some of their food habits. They can raise food economy to the plane of patriotic service. They can assist families in matters of economy so that better living conditions can be maintained. Of course, all home-economics teachers will alter laboratory practices so as to conform to present food conditions, but they may do much more; they may carefully make plain the reasons why America with her abundance of food material asks her people to select carefully, use wisely, and waste not one particle.

FOOD CONDITIONS.

There are great quantities of food; how great will soon be known from those now employed in a food survey of the country. Why talk of food limitations where there is an abundance?

Because the United States has more than a hundred million inhabitants to care for, an Army to feed, the food supply of her allies to supplement, and the needs of neutral countries to consider.

She has more than enough for herself. Her excess is sufficient to send to her allies nearly 60 per cent of that which they need to receive from her.

## EXTRA FOOD IN THE UNITED STATES.

If it were assumed that her allies could feed themselves with what they have produced in their own countries so many days of the year and needed to buy food from America to sustain them the remaining days, then it could be said that America could conveniently spare them enough for six days out of every ten days they were hungry, and that they would have to starve the other four days.

Our immediate duty is to save and send over seas 450,000,000 bushels of wheat, when we have only two-thirds of that amount to spare. If each of us should eat three and one-half slices of bread for every five slices we each have been accustomed to, the desired result would be achieved, the victorious conclusion of the war would be assured, and tens of thousands of deaths from starvation would be avoided. Already our allies have sacrificed their bravest and best for the cause which is now our cause. Their sacrifices must go on, but they must not be allowed also to starve. However generous our giving, this summer and fall there confronts France and England and Italy the blackest and most agonizing winter they have ever had to endure.<sup>1</sup>

## AMERICA MUST ASSIST HER ALLIES.

America can do much to assist her allies in securing enough food to maintain them during this period of food shortage.

Those who have advised increased production, careful preservation, and the intelligent and conservative use of food have had this end in view. A little less food wasted in the fields and orchards, greater care in transportation and storage, some restriction by adults who are well and strong in the cravings of appetite, more careful cooking that all foods may be palatable and attractive, and a part of the food needed will be found.

## CHILDREN'S DIET.

The children of the United States must have an abundance of wholesome, palatable food. Not all mothers know how to choose such foods, and no small part of the opportunity of the home economics teachers will be that of assisting mothers to select the food for their families and to prepare it properly. Underfed children become undeveloped men and women, and America demands that all of her people be at their best in the approaching difficult years.

## TEACHING FOOD SELECTION.

Since many men and women eat one or more meals each day away from home, it is essential that there should be a more general knowledge of food requirements in order that those purchasing prepared articles may be enabled to select so wisely that their bodily needs shall be supplied at a reasonable cost and in a way to cause a minimum drain upon the national food resources.

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<sup>1</sup> Food Administration—*Ten Lessons in Food Conservation.*

## FOOD PRESERVATION.

Home economics teachers have greatly assisted in the work of food preservation. Through September, October, and early November a continuation of this work must be stimulated. The early laboratory lessons may well consist entirely of canning, preserving, and drying foods. Where conditions are favorable, storage of root crops, cabbage, and similar foods should be taught.

## ORCHARD WASTE.

Often within a few miles of a city much fall fruit wastes because no one has time to gather or haul the less valuable portions to the market. What can the home-economics teacher do about this food wastage?

She can awaken the interest of her students and take them to the orchards to gather this fruit. Fruit-picking picnics can be inaugurated.

When the fruit has been gathered, apple-paring bees, apple-butter parties, and community canning days can be organized.

## TRANSPORTATION OF CHILDREN.

Some drayage firm, retail dry-goods merchant, or public-spirited automobile owners will take the children to and from the orchards. This has been done when the children went out 30 miles from the city for fruit picking.

If this work is done with a public-spirited purpose, much volunteer help can be secured and many city organizations will cooperate.

## DISPOSAL OF PRODUCTS.

The products of this type of food preservation may be donated to the Red Cross, sent to the soldiers in France, used for the public-school lunches, or sold for some community project.

Because food is thus handled in large quantities does not necessitate a loss in the quality of teaching.

## AVAILABLE INFORMATION.

Teachers of home economics may secure from the office of the Food Administration "Ten Lessons on Food Conservation," and from the Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletins 807, 808, 817, 837, 841, 853, and many others of especial value in the present food crisis.

The "Ten Lessons on Food Conservation" will be of value to the teacher herself, making her familiar with food conditions and with

the most recent knowledge concerning variations of established food habits which may be safely advised. The Farmers' Bulletins can be secured in quantities and introduced as texts for the children and for use by the parents.

#### DISPOSAL OF LABORATORY PRODUCTS.

Food cooked in small quantities is usually eaten immediately by the children in the class. The probability is that this is eaten at irregular hours and is not needed by the child. Is it not possible to check this form of waste?

Food cooked in family-sized recipes can be used in one of several ways—it can be sent home by the child and served as part of the family meal; it can be served in the lunch room; or it can be used in the service of the teachers' luncheon.

The first way, that of sending the food home by the child, has been found practicable in small towns and in cities up to 300,000 population. The food in these cases has either been brought from home in the required quantities or has been paid for at the school.

The effect upon the student's attitude has been found to be good, because the family approval of her product stimulates her to desire to excel in her work.

The cooperation of the mothers is necessary in this form of teaching. There is no question but that it requires more management on the part of the teacher. If it brings good results for the student and saves food, it is worth while; and, further, if it introduces new methods of food preparation into the homes by awakening interest in the cooked foods, it will be of great value at the present time.

The second method of disposal of laboratory products is by cooking foods in family quantities and selling these in the lunch room.

The maintenance of a lunch room under the direction of the home economics instructor has been found advisable wherever 50 or more children are in need of school lunches. This number justifies the employment of one untrained woman for a few hours each day to wash the dishes and cook the articles of food that must be prepared every day.

The children preparing articles for the lunch room certainly should be permitted to taste the products of their labor.

Pride in workmanship is stimulated by the lunch-room plan of marketing the product; food waste is eliminated, and better food is served to the school pupils. This work should result in a third benefit; it should be used to teach the students intelligent choice of foods and should also interest them in the use of the more abundant foods when these are prepared in varied and attractive ways.



The penny lunch and service of food to anemic and tubercular children are modifications of the lunch problem and will be found to be excellent schemes in certain of the poorer neighborhoods in the larger cities. This service entails an expense to the school authorities or to some charitable association; but if needed, it should be maintained.

The third method of economical use of laboratory products is in the service of food to teachers. This is an adequate method in but few cases. It is valuable where there are but few students in the classes and where the teachers of necessity stay at noon. The consolidated rural school may with advantage practice this type of service, and the city schools can combine this with one of the other methods.

#### STAPLES FOR EUROPE, PERISHABLES FOR AMERICA.

If America is to send foods to the allied countries, those transported must be staples that will not deteriorate in transit; they must be those that will give the greatest nutriment in proportion to the space required in transportation, and they must be foods to which the European people are accustomed.

This makes it necessary for American people to use the abundant perishable foods.

Fish, poultry, eggs, milk, green vegetables, and fresh fruits all belong to the group of perishables; while beef, wheat, fats, and sugar belong in the group of staples.

#### EUROPEAN FOOD PREFERENCES.

The English and French peoples have never acquired a tolerance for corn products. While this may be a regrettable condition, it can not be altered now. This is not an opportune time to force a weakened and suffering people to eat that which they do not like. Hence American people are asked to somewhat restrict themselves in the use of wheat and to avail themselves of the many desirable corn preparations which are in all markets.

#### READJUSTMENT OF FOOD COURSES.

Home economics teachers, by slight readjustment of their courses in foods, can stress the cookery of perishable foods and reduce the use of the needed staples.

Attractive ways of serving vegetables may be multiplied. New recipes should be used wherein the admixture of small quantities of meat or meat flavors may be introduced, thus satisfying the craving for meat while using but little.

All ways of using whole milk, skim milk, buttermilk, and cottage cheese should be taught and every opportunity should be used to emphasize the value of milk as a food.

Canning at home has increased 300 per cent this year. May it not be well to enlarge the list of attractive ways of serving canned foods? There is danger that a satiety may result if a vigorous campaign for variation of service of canned food be not pushed.

Since the substitution of oat, corn, and rice products for wheat breakfast foods is desirable, this should be developed in the laboratory lessons.

Local abundant foods should be used in preference to foods that tax the railroads because of long hauls. It now appears that the Irish potato and sweet potato will be plentiful. When a meal offers abundance of well served potatoes and other vegetables there is a lessened use of bread and meat, which amounts to a conservation of these staples.

In the quick-bread lessons corn meal should be freely used; and if it is felt that some work must be given with flour, use the whole wheat in preference to the fine flours.

It will be found that the Department of Agriculture is sending out excellent light-bread receipes wherein other grain products are combined with wheat flour. This "patriotic bread" may be made attractive in both appearance and flavor.

In the service of soup, crackers should be omitted; and whenever thickening of gravies and sauces can be made with cornstarch instead of flour, this also can be practiced.

In making desserts, the teacher may omit such articles as pies, fritters, dumplings, etc., and substitute such preparations as custards, blanchmange, gelatines, and frozen desserts.

May the teachers not, for a time, omit many fancy methods of service, such as fontage cups, crustades, and garnishes made from edible material but not usually eaten? Simpler service and more careful preparation may lead to real economies.

In many parts of the country fish is unlimited in supply. The markets have been poorly supplied because of irregular demand. Is it possible to teach many more lessons in the service of fish and to thoroughly acquaint the children with the varieties available and the excellent quality of this food? The fish supply is unlimited and inexhaustible.

Molasses and honey are the perishables to be substituted wherever possible for sugar. Candy making, except with molasses, may well be omitted this winter; and if home economics teachers can enlist schoolgirls in a campaign against candy eating, they can save many millions of pounds of sugar for other, more necessary consumption.

The probable need of increased quantities of fat for industrial purposes makes economies in the use of fats most desirable. May not lessons in the rendering and clarifying of fats be increased? Children may be induced to bring to school every scrap of fat that can be spared from home. This can be rendered, made into soap, and disposed of as suggested for excess amounts of canned and dried foods.

One school in New York had molds made for shaping the soap so that each bar of soap carried the school name. This soap was given for the use of the soldiers in France.

#### COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

The civilian relief department of the National Red Cross Association is prepared to cooperate with all home economics teachers in stimulating these various forms of school activities.

It is suggested that the teachers acquaint themselves with the working plans and special interests of all patriotic organizations.

#### MODIFICATIONS OF SEWING COURSES.

It should be required that half of all class work be done upon old material. This rule has existed in the sewing classes of England for many years. The value in teaching lessons in thrift can not be overestimated.

Wherever possible articles useful to others rather than to the student should be made. This is valuable in establishing among the students interest in the great national and patriotic movement of the present time and in suppressing selfishness and vanity.

There is no particular reason why the student in sewing should carry away the product of her efforts. The instruction is given, as is all other instruction in schools, for training the intelligence and the skill of the student. To rely upon the selfish desire of the student for an article of personal use or adornment to hold her interest is to undervalue the real purpose of the work. To pursue this method has been to follow the line of least resistance.

Pride in being thrifty and willingness to subordinate personal desires for national good are characteristics that should be fostered in all home-economics classes.

For the most elementary sewing class make the cutting lesson consist of cutting "substitute handkerchiefs" for gifts to the Red Cross. These pieces of old cotton or linen are cut 18 inches square and may be either hemmed or unhemmed.

When these are done, a simple laundry lesson may be given where the children wash, boil, and iron the pieces. This furnishes an

opportunity to talk about the need of sterilization of all articles which are used as handkerchiefs.

Knitting and crocheting with large needles with 8 or 10 three-ply knitting cotton is easy and attractive work for small girls. Wash cloths 10 inches square are needed as Red Cross supplies. The first made may be retained by the child, the second given to the Red Cross. Miss Marshall's recently prepared material is of particular value and can be secured from the Red Cross Association.

Hemming old turkish towels for wash cloths is suggested as easy work for small hands.

Hemming old table linen for Red Cross napkins and tray covers is quite as instructive as the sewing upon guest towels, which has hitherto been a common problem.

The washing and boiling of these articles makes additional discussion of asepsis appropriate.

The usual problem of making a sewing bag should be modified either by making the sewing bag from old materials or by making hot-water bag covers for the Red Cross. In some instances children can make hot-water bag covers for hot-water bags used for the babies in their homes. This gives an opportunity to teach a little lesson about the care and comfort of infants.

In regions where flour sacks are still obtainable or where sugar is purchased in cotton bags the hemming of these for kitchen towels or dust cloths should be made one of the regular lessons.

Stocking material is easy to sew. Clean old stockings should be brought to the school, and one of the earliest lessons in the use of patterns may be devoted to cutting down stockings and making these for little children. Old knit undergarments can in like manner be cut down and used.

All darning and mending should be upon actual garments, not upon practice pieces. Stimulation to the students in this type of work may be attained by putting in practice the Seattle plan of city-wide competitions.

Men's shirts are usually only worn out about the neckband. These shirts can be used to make attractive sewing aprons for pupils and kimona aprons and dresses for refugee children.

Students in the seventh and eighth grades and high-school classes may sew for the Red Cross on various hospital garments. In this work both speed and efficiency may be developed. If each child who makes a garment is permitted to attach the name of her school and room to the garment she will be more interested.

The acceptance of these suggestions entails additional work and responsibility for the teacher in charge. It will be necessary that she establish among the mothers of the children in her classes an under-



standing of her purposes and of present economic conditions as they relate to woolen and cotton fabrics.

She will need earnest cooperation from the mothers and will also find it necessary to establish connections with the Red Cross and all charitable organizations. The Red Cross is prepared to suggest plans and give assistance in forming this working combination.

At times the teacher will find it necessary to solicit among her friends and acquaintances the gift of such articles as old stockings, old shirts, old muslin, and other materials.

In doing this added work she will be but doing her "bit."

#### USE OF WORN WOOLEN GARMENTS.

It is most desirable that good woolen materials be utilized to the fullest extent during the approaching winter. Wool is both scarce and high and all articles made from pure wool will be obtained with great difficulty. Many factors have contributed to the present wool prices.

Demand for meat has been so great that many sheep have gone upon the market.

Feed has been high priced and the temptation to reduce the flocks consequently great.

An unusually severe winter with many sharp changes of weather caused heavy losses among the herds and also affected the quality of wool.

Heretofore we have imported woolens from British sources. These importations have ceased.

Immense quantities of wool products are demanded for the equipment of the Army and Navy. This need has tended to push prices upward, and unless the ordinary domestic demand be reduced a great deficit in the wool supply will become apparent.

These conditions should be impressed upon the consciousness of school girls and mothers. A patriotic desire to assist the country in her effort to conserve all resources and thus secure the maximum good to the greatest number of her citizens should be stimulated among all patrons of the school.

Remodeling and using clothing of previous winters can be made a form of material service and can become a fashion which, when not followed, will result in the condemnation of those who refuse to follow the custom.

Since the ripping and remaking of garments distributes dust, and since dust is often a carrier of disease, it is suggested that the cooperation of the health department be secured and that all worn material be thoroughly disinfected before being worked upon.

This treatment of clothing will afford an excellent opportunity to discuss the cause and prevention of colds. The need of the disinfection of clothing and bedding, after colds, tonsillitis, and bronchitis, as well as after those diseases which are always recognized as being infectious or contagious, is great. The following suggestion concerning the use in sewing classes of worn materials for garment making are prepared by Prof. Davis, of the domestic art department of the home economics school of the Oregon Agricultural College:

#### USING WORN MATERIALS.

1. Examine garments carefully and note how best they can be utilized and whether they are worth remaking.

Remember that remaking involves often more work than the making of new garments.

One or more of the following processes is often needed:

Cleaning { washing.  
removal of stains.  
sponging, pressing, etc.

Redyeing.

Ripping.

Very careful planning in cutting.

Combining of materials, if not enough of one, etc.

2. In remaking remember there is a saving of the price of material; also a conserving of material which otherwise would be wasted.

3. Do not put *unnecessary* labor on remaking.

For example, if pieces of old garment are large enough for recutting don't take time to *rip* seams; cut them off.

4. Have pieces *clean* and *well pressed* before beginning to cut.

Cut garment apart previous to sponging, washing, removing spots, pressing, etc. It is much easier to work with smaller, flat pieces.

5. If remodeling is to be worth while the finished garments must—

1. Be *attractive*.

2. Have *wearing quality*. Consider this before beginning.

6. Choose patterns very carefully. Note the size and shape of pieces with which you have to work and choose a pattern the design of which gives pieces which will cut from material you have without conspicuous piecing.

For example, if pieces are not long enough for skirt length, choose skirt with yoke, tunic skirt, or two-tier skirt, any of which require shorter lengths.

7. In remaking, piecing may often be successfully hidden under decoration if carefully planned.

Plan to piece under tucks, pleats, folds, where braid is put on, insertion is set in, etc.

8. Place whole pattern on and *know* just how you are going to get whole garment from pieces before cutting any one piece.

9. In combining materials consider carefully color and texture of materials for attractive and harmonious results.

In school work it is suggested that the following subject matter should accompany the make-over problems:

1. Proper method of washing different materials.
2. Removal of stains from different materials.

3. Proper method of sponging and pressing different materials.
4. Dyeing of different materials.
5. Combining materials, considering
 

|          |          |
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| color,   | finish,  |
| texture, | pattern, |
| weight,  | quality. |
6. Appropriate dress for children, emphasizing
  - Simplicity* of material and design.
  - Comfort*—allowing freedom of movement, effects of pressure and weight.
  - Have plenty of good illustrative material.
  - Materials* that will *wash* and *clean*.
  - Appropriate forms of decoration.

In this problem teachers should try and instill a spirit of thrift and economy in girls.

In a class in high school dealing with house furnishing the art of patch work and of hand-made rugs may be revived. With the present shortage of wool no scraps should be wasted.

This sort of work is a design problem and should be developed with the help of the art teacher. Scraps of either wool or cotton may be combined in an artistic quilt or comforter—giving opportunity for design, color harmony, and fabric study.

These adaptations of home economic courses will strengthen rather than weaken the work as heretofore given, and will be of greatest value in awakening among the students interest in the world problems of to-day.

